

*Holds Veterans Event, Business Roundtable on Economic Crisis, and Roundtable on Green Jobs and Renewable Energy*

(Normal, IL) -

Today Congresswoman Debbie Halvorson attended several events in McLean County, speaking with veterans, business representatives, and renewable energy advocates from the area. It was Halvorson's first visit to McLean County since being sworn in on January 6, 2009.

Halvorson began her day speaking with and listening to the concerns of student veterans and veterans' groups from the area, including the VFW, the American Legion, and Operation Porchlight, a charity that helps families of servicemen and women cope while loved ones are overseas. Halvorson is the only Illinois delegation member on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

"Veterans' issues are a top priority for me. They've sacrificed so much for us, and we owe it to them to provide the best services possible. One of my top concerns on the Veterans' Affairs Committee is improving veterans' health care and making sure we reduce the backlog at the VA," Halvorson said.

Later in the afternoon, Halvorson hosted two roundtable meetings at Heartland Community College. The first roundtable involved over 25 business leaders from McLean County, ranging from some of the large corporations that call McLean County home to small business and franchise owners. The discussion centered upon the economic crisis and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which recently passed the House. Halvorson supported the bill, and commented on its potential benefits for the area.

Halvorson said, "Our economy is bleeding jobs, and I'm convinced we need to act now. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act invests in many of important sectors of our economy, and will have a lot of benefits and tax breaks to help businesses thrive. We need to save and create jobs. That's the bottom line. The purpose of this bill is to do exactly that."

Later, Halvorson hosted a roundtable with Heartland Community College officials and others involved in green initiatives in the area. College officials discussed Heartland's "Green Institute" for renewable energy and energy efficiency technology and the college's strategic plan to emphasize sustainability initiatives in the curriculum, campus facilities, and operation.

"I'm committed to finding ways we can create jobs right here in the 11th District. Heartland is at the forefront of a new American economy based on energy efficiency and renewable energy. I'm proud of the work they're doing and it's great to hear how they're educating the next generation of green leaders right here in McLean County," Halvorson said.

"The recovery bill is going to help America continue developing green job programs and advancing the technology and infrastructure necessary for a sustainable, energy efficient economy. And it's going to save and create jobs immediately. That's why I support the bill and that's why I'm speaking with people throughout my district about the ways it can benefit our community. The long term growth of our economy depends on us finding ways to use energy in smart ways, and this recovery bill will set us on that course."